

Source Selection Statement for the NASA Global Modeling and Assimilation Office  
Acquisition  
RFP NNG11317113R

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On December 9, 2011, I, along with senior officials from Goddard Space Flight Center (GSFC) met with the Integrated Evaluation Team (IET) appointed to evaluate proposals in connection with the Global Modeling and Assimilation Office (GMAO) Scientific Support Services Acquisition.

*Procurement Description*

The principal purpose of the GMAO contract is to provide support to GMAO in its development and use of comprehensive global models and data assimilation systems for the atmosphere, ocean, land surface, atmospheric constituents, and ocean biology. Among the requirements is to support projects within the GMAO that encompass all aspects of the development, operation, and maintenance of the assimilation and forecast systems, specifically in three areas: Scientific Research and Development Support, Development and Maintenance of Operational Capabilities, and Project Management Support. The contractor support work required by most tasks involves the development or modification of major software systems and subsystems.

The GMAO Request-for-Proposal (RFP) was released on July 8, 2011.

Two (2) amendments were issued to the RFP. Amendment Number one revised the Statement of Work to include proposal preparation support. Amendment Number two corrected the Government Pricing Model (GPM) hours for several labor categories. No exception was taken to any of the revisions provided in the amendments.

The contract will be a Cost Plus Fixed Fee (CPFF) Indefinite Delivery Indefinite Quantity (IDIQ) contract with an effective ordering period of 5 years from the date of contract award.

This procurement was conducted as a Small Business Set-Aside under NAICS code 541712 with a size standard of 1,000 employees in accordance with FAR Part 15.3, entitled "Source Selection."

*Proposals Submitted*

On August 22, 2011, NASA received timely proposals from the following three (3) companies:

Science Systems and Applications, Inc. (SSAI)
I.M. Systems Group, Inc. (IMSG)
Earth Resources Technology, Inc. (ERT)

### *Evaluation Procedures and Summary Results*

The IET evaluated proposals in accordance with the source selection procedures identified in Federal Acquisition Regulation (FAR) Part 15.3 and NASA FAR Supplement (NFS) 1815.3 (except for point scoring, which was not required because of the contract size), and the RFP evaluation criteria. The RFP listed three evaluation factors: Mission Suitability, Cost, and Past Performance. The RFP specified the relative order of importance of these factors as follows:

The Cost Factor is significantly less important than the combined importance of the Mission Suitability Factor and the Past Performance Factor. As individual factors, the Mission Suitability Factor is the most important, and the Past Performance Factor is more important than the Cost Factor.

Mission Suitability has three Subfactors as follows: Management Plan, Understanding the Requirement of the Statement of Work (SOW), and Representative Task Order (RTO).

Subfactor A	Management Plan
Subfactor B	Understanding the Requirement
Subfactor C	Representative Task Order

As individual factors, Subfactor A-Management Plan is more important than Subfactor B-Understanding the Requirement (SOW), and Subfactor B is more important than Subfactor C-Representative Task Order (RTO).

After weighting the findings for the individual subfactors according to the RFP, the IET assigned an overall adjectival rating to proposals under the Mission Suitability factor. The applicable adjectival ratings were “Excellent,” “Very Good,” “Good,” “Fair,” and “Poor” as described in Section M of the RFP.

The proposed costs were evaluated for cost realism and reasonableness in accordance with FAR 15.305(a)(1) and NFS 1815.305(a)(1)(B), in order to determine the offeror’s probable cost. Adjustments were made to the proposed cost to reflect the probable cost to the government.

Past Performance evaluations were conducted in accordance with provisions M.5 of the solicitation. As stated in provision L.18, the past performance record indicates relevant quantitative and qualitative aspects of performing services or delivering products similar in size, content, and/or complexity to the requirements of this acquisition. Past Performance information sources included: offeror-provided past performance information, offeror’s customer-provided past performance questionnaires, information obtained from government past performance databases and the internet, as well as interviews with the offeror’s customers.

As a result of the evaluation process, the final IET ratings are summarized below:

Offeror	Mission Suitability	Past Performance	Cost
SSAI	Excellent	Very High	Lowest
IMSG	Fair	Very High	Highest
ERT	Fair	High	2 <sup>nd</sup> Lowest

### *Detailed Results of the Evaluation*

## **MISSION SUITABILITY FACTOR**

### **SSAI**

SSAI's proposal received an overall adjectival rating of *Excellent* for Mission Suitability. SSAI received three (3) significant strengths, one (1) strength, no weaknesses, no significant weaknesses and no deficiencies.

### **Subfactor A: Management Plan**

SSAI received two (2) significant strengths, one (1) strength, no weaknesses, no significant weaknesses and no deficiencies.

### **SIGNIFICANT STRENGTH #1: SUPERIOR QUALITY ASSURANCE PLAN**

The Offeror's Quality Assurance Plan provides significant confidence that the Government will receive the services for which it is contracting. The Offeror's in-house developed management tool that provides a streamlined process to manage documents effectively and communicate efficiently on task management and Quality Assurance issues. The system provides the Government with tools to facilitate task order submission and monitoring contract performance/surveillance.

### **SIGNIFICANT STRENGTH #2: PROACTIVE STAFFING AND TRAINING APPROACHES TO ENSURE QUALIFIED TECHNICAL STAFF FOR SPECIALIZED REQUIREMENTS**

The Offeror has a comprehensive recruitment plan to support GMAO's staffing requirements. They take several strategic, corporate-wide approaches to ensure that a diverse, technically qualified workforce is readily available for the contract, including a comprehensive training and mentoring plan. The Offeror's strategy for retaining legacy knowledge within the company reduces the need for both future external searches and training of new personnel.

### **STRENGTH #1: ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE OF PHASE-IN PLAN WITH LOW RISK**

The Offeror proposed a well structured phase-in plan that provides an effective approach for the orderly transition of management and personnel to minimize the impact of the change in the Prime contractor and so ensure continuity of on-going operations in all contract areas. The plan

maximizes the likelihood of retaining qualified incumbents and demonstrates their ability to assume responsibility for the performance of the contract.

**Subfactor B: Understanding the Requirements**

SSAI received one (1) significant strength, no strengths, no weaknesses, no significant weaknesses and no deficiencies.

**SIGNIFICANT STRENGTH #1: IDENTIFICATION OF CRITICAL ISSUES AND TECHNICAL RISKS DEMONSTRATED A SUPERIOR UNDERSTANDING OF THE ISSUES FACED IN GMAO'S AREAS OF SCIENTIFIC DEVELOPMENT**

The Offeror's presentations of (i) the broad scientific and technical challenges associated with supporting the GMAO's Project objectives, (ii) the project-level technical risks and (iii) critical issues and/or technical risks for most of the areas of the SOW demonstrates a very clear understanding of the requirement. The Offeror proposed ideas that were not directly specified in the SOW, including identifying ways to improve GMAO's processes, reflecting the Offeror's culture of encouraging and rewarding innovation. The Offeror's ability to develop and articulate approaches to risk mitigation demonstrates a thorough understanding of the issues and challenges facing the GMAO at the project and task level.

**Subfactor C: Representative Task Order**

SSAI's proposal was adequate. No significant strengths, no strengths, no weaknesses, no significant weaknesses or no deficiencies were noted.

**IMSG**

IMSG's proposal received an overall adjectival rating of *Fair* for Mission Suitability. IMSG received no significant strengths, three (3) strengths, four (4) weaknesses, one (1) significant weakness and no deficiencies.

**Subfactor A: Management Plan**

IMSG received no significant strengths, two (2) strengths, three (3) weaknesses, no significant weaknesses and no deficiencies.

**STRENGTH #1: STRONG PHASE-IN PLAN**

The Offeror's proposed teaming arrangement increases the likelihood of successful contract performance by: (i) offering a low-risk phase-in to the government, and (ii) increasing the likelihood of retaining experienced technical staff. The experience of the proposed teaming

arrangement reduces the risk of a break in continuity of on-going support because the incumbent already knows how to conduct the work that will be contracted for.

#### **STRENGTH #2: STRONG QUALITY ASSURANCE PLAN**

The Offeror's Quality Assurance Plan (QAP) will enhance the potential for successful contract performance by early sharing of information on potential performance deficiencies thus allowing issues to be addressed before they become significant and incur additional costs. As part of their QAP, the Offeror would request regular feedback from GMAO at several levels. The Offeror has developed a communication and program management tool, which provides the Government with a streamlined process to manage documents effectively and communicate efficiently on task management as well as QA issues.

#### **WEAKNESS #1: LACK OF ADEQUATE DESCRIPTION OF SUBCONTRACTOR MANAGEMENT**

The Offeror's proposal lacks both the delineation of prime/subcontractor responsibilities requested by the RFP and details of the additional complexities (surveillance, communication) presented by subcontracting arrangements. Hence the Government has no insight into how the performance of the large subcontract will be managed by the Prime. The lack of attention given to describing the lines of authority in the management of such a large fraction of the staff as subcontractors, especially when many of those staying with the subcontractor will be in senior positions, indicates that the proposal team has not thought through the details of their partnership and thus indicates potential risks to successful contract performance.

#### **WEAKNESS #2: INADEQUATE DESCRIPTION OF RECRUITMENT, TRAINING AND MENTORING STRATEGIES**

The Offeror's proposal did not provide evidence of effective strategies for recruitment, for staffing fluctuating requirements, or for training and mentoring. Their discussion of recruitment lacks recognition of staffing challenges for the GMAO's highly specialized technical tasks. This is critical as the talent pool for this specialized work is limited. It has not been demonstrated to the Government within this proposal how the offeror will ensure that their employees are kept abreast of the constantly evolving scientific and technical advances in modeling, assimilation and high-end computing.

#### **WEAKNESS #3: INADEQUATE SAFETY AND HEALTH PLAN**

The Offeror's Safety and Health (S&H) Plan was inadequate. Although IMSG followed NASA's instructions in Appendix E of NPR 8715.3, their response did not satisfy current requirements. Most of the references included in the S&H Plan are obsolete and do not reflect compliance with NASA's current requirements. Also, the S&H Plan indicates that most of the responsibilities for implementation will be delegated to personnel without documented safety backgrounds or

training, and there is no documentation of a corporate safety official to provide guidance and oversight to the Offeror's team regarding S&H compliance.

### **Subfactor B: Understanding the Requirements**

IMSG received no significant strengths, one (1) strength, one (1) weakness, no significant weakness and no deficiencies.

#### **STRENGTH #1: STRONG UNDERSTANDING OF REQUIREMENTS AND PROPOSING INNOVATIVE IDEAS FOR SEVERAL TASKS**

At the task level, the Offeror demonstrated a strong understanding of the requirements. For several of the tasks in the SOW, the Offeror proposed innovative ideas that were not directly specified in the SOW. The Offeror also identified critical issues that are important to the operational system development and maintenance and also for the Data Assimilation System (DAS) data production. Their proposed approach demonstrates a clear understanding of GMAO's production system requirements.

#### **WEAKNESS #1: WEAK PRESENTATION OF PROJECT-LEVEL CHALLENGES AND RISKS AND TECHNICAL RISKS AND MITIGATION APPROACHES AT THE TASK LEVEL**

The Offeror's presentations of broad scientific and technical challenges associated with supporting the GMAO's Project Objectives, of Project-level technical risks, and of the critical issues and/or technical risks for most of the tasks in Section IV of the SOW are underdeveloped and solutions/approaches to addressing issues and mitigating risks lack insight and/or meaningful solutions.

An understanding of the issues and challenges facing the GMAO at the Project and task level is critical for successful contract performance with minimal Government intervention. The inability of the Offeror to articulate meaningful challenges, critical issues and technical risks does not provide confidence that they have this understanding and will be able to anticipate or mitigate significant risks of performance deficiency.

### **Subfactor C: Representative Task Order**

IMSG received no significant strength, no strength, no weakness, one (1) significant weakness and no deficiencies.

#### **SIGNIFICANT WEAKNESS #1: SIGNIFICANT UNDERSTAFFING OF THE RTO**

The Offeror's plan for the RTO significantly underestimates the level of effort needed for successful delivery of what is described in Section L as the "wide range of scientific and technical expertise, skills and management throughout a typical development cycle of the GMAO's atmospheric DAS." Their proposed level of effort is substantially lower than that of the

in-house Government estimate for both Phase I and Phase II. The underestimate is due to (i) a lack of recognition of the complexity of the work and the time required for the necessary iterations during the introduction of new capabilities; and (ii) deliverables that are not addressed adequately.

The RTO response raises the question of the Offeror's depth for understanding the requirements and their ability to identify the broader skill mix needed. It increases the potential risk of unsuccessful contract performance if sufficient staffing levels with the necessary specialized skill mix are not retained.

## **ERT**

ERT's proposal received an overall adjectival rating of *Fair*. ERT received no significant strengths, four (4) strengths, two (2) weaknesses, one (1) significant weakness and no deficiencies.

### **Subfactor A: Management Plan**

ERT received no significant strengths, three (3) strengths, one (1) weakness, no significant weakness and no deficiencies.

#### **STRENGTH #1: STRONG PHASE-IN PLAN**

The Offeror's well structured phase-in plan provides an effective approach for the orderly transition of management and personnel to minimize the impact of the change in Prime contractor and so ensure continuity of on-going operations in all contract areas. The Offeror's plan demonstrates their ability to assume responsibility for the performance of the contract. It gives the Government confidence that their phase-in will provide continuity in staffing, minimizing the risk of disruption to GMAO's work.

#### **STRENGTH #2: STRONG QUALITY ASSURANCE PLAN**

The Offeror's description of their Quality Assurance Plan (QAP) provides confidence that the Government will receive the services for which we are contracting. The Offeror's tool provides a streamlined process to manage documents effectively and communicate efficiently on task management and QA issues. The Offeror's approach to Quality Assurance includes a strong corporate commitment to Quality Management System (QMS) practices.

The Offeror's QAP enhances the potential for successful contract performance by early sharing of information on potential performance deficiencies. Their tools will increase efficiency and

transparency for contract monitoring, which will prove to enhance the potential for successful contract performance.

**STRENGTH #3: STRONG STAFFING, TRAINING AND MENTORING STRATEGY**

The Offeror has robust mechanisms in place to support GMAO's long-term staffing requirements. They take several strategic approaches to ensure that a diverse, technically qualified workforce is readily available for the contract including a comprehensive training and mentoring plan that allocates corporate resources towards training to ensure that staff maintain relevant specialized skills.

**WEAKNESS #1: SCOPE OF RESPONSIBILITIES FOR TASK LEADS IS TOO BROAD**

The Offeror's proposal does not provide adequate information on the depth and scope of responsibilities given to the Task Leads (TLs) in their plan for capturing key performance metrics. Nor is any indication given of the time required for TLs to execute those responsibilities. Thus the Government cannot ascertain whether or not the totality of those responsibilities – both administrative and business - will detract from the technical responsibilities that should be the TL's priority.

TLs take on the responsibility for administrative duties associated with surveillance of the technical work. If excessive business administrative burdens are placed on the TLs as well, this will further reduce their time for technical work and leadership (which are of paramount importance) and lead to a loss of technical productivity.

**Subfactor B: Understanding the Requirements**

ERT received no significant strengths, one (1) strength, no weakness, one (1) significant weakness and no deficiencies.

**STRENGTH #1: STRONG PRESENTATION OF CRITICAL ISSUES AND/OR TECHNICAL RISKS DEMONSTRATED DEPTH OF UNDERSTANDING OF REQUIREMENTS**

The Offeror's presentations of critical issues and/or technical risks for almost all of the tasks in Sections IV and V of the SOW demonstrate a very clear understanding of the requirement.

Their discussion of the knowledge and the overall expertise needed is very clear and comprehensive, demonstrating the depth of their understanding of the requirements.

The Offeror proposal to bring their own ideas to improve GMAO's approach to software development projects would add value to the Government.



**SIGNIFICANT WEAKNESS #1: LACK OF RESPONSE TO ONE AREA IN THE SOW AND ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF A POTENTIAL ORGANIZATIONAL CONFLICT OF INTEREST (OCI) RELATED TO THAT AREA**

The Offeror did not respond to Section IV, B.10 “Preparation of Proposals”, as required by the RFP. In particular, the Offeror did not provide any information to demonstrate that they understood “the nature of the support services necessary to perform the functional requirement” as required by the RFP.

Furthermore, in their proposal, the Offeror acknowledged that a potential OCI issue exists relating to their Evaluation Assessment Studies Services and Support (EASSS) Contract at LaRC and that, without mitigation of this OCI issue, they would take “a partial exception” to B.10. Without mitigation, the Offeror would be unable to provide the support for some of GMAO’s proposals in response to Announcements of Opportunity (AOs). More importantly, they would not be able to staff the work from those proposals except through a subcontractor, requiring a “direct reporting relationship between GSFC and the subcontractor.” This approach will have a negative impact on GMAO because the Offeror would not be able to staff the work from those proposals when funded, except through a subcontractor. Privity of the contract would not exist between the Government and the subcontractor, thereby significantly increasing the risk of unsuccessful contract performance. Having a contract for which the Government has to undertake two different modes of communication (for prime and subcontractor), different task request routes and different surveillance methods will increase the Government’s burden for contract oversight. It would force GSFC to manage two contracts. Since this is not a multiple award contract, there is no mechanism to issue a second contract for GMAO support.

**Subfactor C: Representative Task Order**

ERT received no significant strengths, no strengths, one (1) weakness, no significant weaknesses and no deficiencies.

**WEAKNESS #1: UNDERSTAFFING OF THE RTO**

The Offeror’s plan for the RTO underestimates the level of effort needed for successful delivery for what is described in Section L as the “wide range of scientific and technical expertise, skills and management throughout a typical development cycle of the GMAO’s atmospheric DAS.” This can be attributed to (1) a lack of understanding of the complexity of the work, particularly the skill mix needed for the necessary iterations during the introduction of new capabilities in Phase I, and (2) deliverables that are not addressed adequately.

## **PAST PERFORMANCE FACTOR**

Both SSAI and IMMSG received *Very High* confidence ratings and ERT received a *High* confidence rating for Past Performance.

The IET considered a total of three (3) past performance references for the prime. The IET weighted content, complexity and size according to the RFP. Content and/or complexity were considered more important than size in the evaluation. The Past Performance confidence rating was based on Offeror provided past performance information, Offeror's customer provided past performance questionnaires, information from Government past performance database, interviews with the Offeror's Customers and descriptions of contract scope researched via the internet. The past performance of the prime contractor was weighted more heavily than any significant subcontractor or combination of significant subcontractors in the overall past performance evaluation.

### **SSAI**

The three contracts that SSAI referenced in the Past Performance volume met the size (average annual amount) and relevancy (recent –ongoing or completed less than 5 years prior to issuance of RFP. Two of the contracts were evaluated as relevant in terms of content and/or complexity) requirement in the RFP, the third was evaluated as having low relevance in terms of content and complexity. Overall SSAI's past performance on two of the contracts was considered very highly relevant to this acquisition based on performance information on two recent contracts that were of Very High relevance in terms of content and complexity and also in terms of size. The Past Performance Questionnaires rated performance on those contracts as very high and NASA PEB ratings were Excellent, so the IET rated overall performance as very high. Therefore, the IET has a very high level of confidence that SSAI will perform the required effort successfully.

### **IMMSG**

The IET considered a total of two (2) past performance references for the prime and two (2) for the significant subcontractor. These four contracts that IMMSG referenced in the Past Performance volume met the size (average annual amount) and relevancy (recent –ongoing or completed less than five (5) years prior to issuance of RFP, and relevant in terms of content and/or complexity) requirement in the RFP. The IET weighted content, complexity and size according to the RFP. IMMSG's past performance, and its significant subcontractor, on all four the contracts was considered very highly relevant to this acquisition based on performance information that were of Very High relevance in terms of content and complexity and also in terms of size. The Past Performance Questionnaires, or updates through conversations with the COTR on one current contract, rated performance on those contracts as very high and the IET adopted that rating for overall performance. Therefore, the IET has a very high level of confidence that IMMSG would perform the required effort successfully.

## **ERT**

The IET considered a total of two (2) past performance references for the prime and one (1) for the significant subcontractor. The three (3) contracts (prime and significant subcontractor) that ERT referenced in the Past Performance volume met the size (average annual amount) and relevancy (recent –ongoing or completed less than five (5) years prior to issuance of RFP, and relevant in terms of content and/or complexity) requirement in the RFP. The IET weighted content, complexity and size according to the RFP. Based on the Past Performance Questionnaire and a follow-up conversation with the Contract Monitor for one of the contracts, ERT's past performance on one of the contracts was considered of moderate relevance to this acquisition and past performance on the second contract was considered of low relevance to this acquisition. The significant subcontractor's performance was considered of high relevance. The Past Performance Questionnaires rated performance on all three contracts as very high. However, because of the low to high relevance ratings, the IET has a high level of confidence that ERT would perform the required effort successfully.

## **COST FACTOR**

Offerors were instructed to propose management and administration labor categories and their associated labor hours within the Government Pricing Model (GPM) provided in the RFP, for which hours were provided. Upon receipt of the proposals, it was determined that an amendment to the RFP should be issued to all offerors to adjust the labor hours in several labor categories within the GPM. No offerors took exception to the adjustment of the hours. All Offerors stated in their proposal that they intend to capture at least 96% of incumbents, therefore, their proposed labor rates were adjusted to reflect the incumbent's current labor rates, which were not provided in the RFP.

SSAI had the lowest proposed and probable cost. The IET made no probable cost adjustments to their proposed indirect rates.

IMSG had the highest proposed and probable cost. The IET made no probable cost adjustments to their proposed indirect rates.

ERT had the second lowest proposed and probable cost. An upward adjustment was made to an indirect rate based on a Defense Contract Auditing Agency (DCAA) Audit. An upward adjustment was also made to one of their labor categories based on information obtained from the averaged salary data from the Western Management Survey and the ERI Salary Assessor.

### *Source Selection Decision*

I carefully reviewed the Integrated Evaluation Team's documentation entitled "Global Modeling and Assimilation Office (GMAO) Scientific Support Services Acquisition Presentation to Source Selection Authority", dated December 9, 2011. I determined that the findings presented by the IET, as documented in its Presentation and Backup Report, were detailed, consistent with the evaluation criteria in the RFP, and provided a clear description of the merits of each proposal. I questioned the IET with regard to its rationale for the findings, and the adjectival ratings, under mission suitability subfactors, past performance and cost. Further, I solicited the views of my ex-officios advisors in their areas of expertise. I determined that the findings were reasonable and valid for purposes of making a selection decision. I accept the findings from the IET and concur with the Contracting Officer that discussions are not necessary. In determining which proposal offered the best value to NASA, I referred to the relative order of importance of the three evaluation factors as specified in the RFP:

The Cost Factor is significantly less important than the combined importance of the Mission Suitability Factor and the Past Performance Factor. As individual factors, the Mission Suitability Factor is the most important, and the Past Performance Factor is more important than the Cost Factor. Additionally, the relative order of importance of the Mission Suitability subfactors are, as follows: Subfactor A – Management Plan, Subfactor B – Understanding the Requirements of the Statement of Work, and Subfactor C – Response to the Representative Task Order.

Finally, I carefully considered the findings in relation to the evaluation criteria in the RFP, and exercised my independent judgment regarding the significance of the findings as discriminators between the proposals in accordance with the evaluation criteria in the RFP.

Comparing the proposals under subfactor A, Management Plan, the most important subfactor under Mission Suitability, I noted a selection discriminator in that SSAI was the only offeror to receive two (2) significant strengths and one (1) strength. IMSG received two (2) strengths and three (3) weaknesses. ERT received three (3) strengths and one (1) weakness. Specifically, I found that SSAI's proposal was significantly strong and distinguished itself over the other offerors in the following areas: Excellent multi-pronged approach to quality assurance of the work performed under the contract; and a superior, comprehensive recruitment plan to ensure that a diverse, technically qualified workforce is readily available for the contract. Whereas, the IMSG proposal did not receive any significant strengths, but it did receive two (2) strengths and three (3) weaknesses. The ERT proposal also did not receive any significant strengths, but it did receive three (3) strengths and one (1) weakness. I determined that IMSG and ERT's proposals did not offer the significant strengths offered by SSAI making them less competitive for selection.

Comparing the proposals under Subfactor B, Understanding the Requirement of the Statement of Work, the second most important subfactor under mission suitability, I noted a selection discriminator in that SSAI was the only offeror to receive a significant strength. SSAI's proposal received one (1) significant strength. Specifically, I found that SSAI's identification of critical issues and technical risks demonstrated a superior understanding of the issues faced in GMAO's areas of scientific development. Their presentation of innovative ideas for the SOW exceeded RFP requirements. Whereas, neither the IMMSG nor the ERT proposal received a significant strength. The IMMSG proposal received one (1) strength and one (1) weakness, and the ERT proposal received one (1) strength and one (1) significant weakness. Specifically, I found that IMMSG's proposal demonstrated a strong understanding of the requirements for individual tasks and proposed innovative ideas for some tasks. However, their presentation of issues and challenges facing the GMAO at the Project and task level was weak and did not provide confidence that they will be able to anticipate or mitigate significant risks of performance deficiency and this was a selection discriminator. I also noted ERT's significant weakness for inadequately addressing technical requirements in the SOW and for the significant detrimental impact of proffered OCI mitigation strategies to the GMAO's ability to submit proposals or staff some funded proposals and this was a selection discriminator.

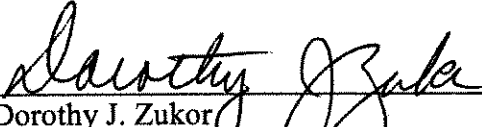
Under Subfactor C, the Response to the Representative Task Order, the least important subfactor, I noted that SSAI's proposal was adequate, receiving no strengths or weaknesses. Whereas, ERT's proposal received a weakness and IMMSG's proposal received 1 significant weakness. Under this subfactor, IMMSG demonstrated a poor understanding of the detailed requirements to be performed on this contract through their understaffing of the task and inadequate response to some of the work in the task. ERT also received a weakness for its underestimating the level of effort needed. I noted this as providing additional support to the selection discriminators noted for the more important subfactors A and B.

Based on the above, I concluded that SSAI's proposal had a clear advantage over the other offerors' proposals in the Mission Suitability Factor. SSAI was the only offeror to receive an "Excellent" rating for overall Mission Suitability. I determined that the lower adjectival rating of "Fair" for IMMSG's proposal and my assessment of a significant weakness and multiple weaknesses made them much less competitive for selection. I also determined that the lower adjectival rating of "Fair" for ERT's proposal and my assessment of a significant weakness and multiple weaknesses made them much less competitive for selection.

The IET's evaluation of Past performance resulted in SSAI and IMMSG receiving a "very high level of confidence" rating and ERT receiving a "high level of confidence". I concluded that SSAI's past performance was highly relevant and that their overall performance ratings were predominantly very high. Overall, IMMSG's past relevance to the GMAO SOW was of the same relevance as that of SSAI's. Overall, ERT received a high rating in past performance because of the lower relevance ratings .

Regarding the Cost Factor, the least important Factor, I examined the rationale for adjustments made in determining probable cost and concurred with the IET's findings. I questioned the IET carefully in order to understand why cost adjustments to the proposed costs were considered necessary and I agreed with the adjustments that were made. I noted that SSAI proposed the lowest cost and offered the lowest probable cost of any of the offerors. IMMSG proposed the highest cost of the three proposals and had the highest probable cost.

Based on the foregoing and upon consideration of the relative importance of the three evaluation factors under the RFP, I determined that one offeror, SSAI, presented an overall superior proposal that offered the best value to the Government. SSAI's significantly higher Mission Suitability Factor rating of Excellent was a major selection discriminator in my decision. Notably, under the Mission Suitability Factor, SSAI's proposal was the only proposal to receive an "Excellent" rating and the other proposals were rated as "Fair." A significantly lower rating. Further, SSAI received the highest possible rating in the past performance factor receiving a "very high level of confidence" rating. Finally, I noted that SSAI's proposal offered the lowest probable cost. Therefore, I select SSAI for award of the Global Modeling and Assimilation Office (GMAO) contract.

  
Dorothy J. Zukor  
GMAO Source Selection Authority

12/15/11  
Date